

# Confidence & Courage Tips... To Help You Realize Your Dreams

*Brought to you by: Gabriel Daniels*

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## Run Freely (A Lesson About Courage)

*By Gabriel Daniels*

One afternoon, many years ago, I went to pick up my mother from work. I got there a little early so I parked the car by the curb, across the street from where she worked, and waited for her.

As I looked outside the car window to my right, there was a small park where I saw a little boy, around one and a half to two years old, running freely on the grass as his mother watched from a short distance. The boy had a big smile on his face as if he had just been set free from some sort of prison. The boy would then fall to the grass, get up, and without hesitation or without looking back at his mother, run as fast as he could, again, still with a smile on his face, *as if nothing had happened.*

At that moment, I thought to myself, "*Why aren't most adults this way?*" Most adults, when they fall down (*figuratively speaking*), make a big deal out of it and don't even make a second attempt. They would be so embarrassed that someone saw them fall that they would not try again. Or, because they fell, they would justify to themselves that they're just not cut out for it. They would end up too afraid to attempt again for fear of failure.

However, with kids (especially at an early age), when they fall down, they don't perceive their falling down as failure, but instead, **they treat it as a learning experience (as just another result/outcome)**. They feel compelled to try and try again until they succeed. (The answer must be...they have not associated "falling down" with the word "failure" yet. Thus, they don't know how to feel the state which accompanies failure. As a result, they are not disempowered in any way. Plus, they probably think to themselves that it's perfectly okay to fall down, that it's not wrong to do so. In other words, **they give themselves permission to make mistakes**, subconsciously. Thus, they remain empowered.)

While I was touched by the boy's persistence, *I was equally touched by the manner in which he ran.* With each attempt, he looked so confident...so natural. No signs of fear, nervousness, or of being discouraged—as if he didn't give a care about the world around him. His only aim was to run freely and to do it as effectively as he could. *He was just being a child—just being himself—being completely in the*

*moment. He was not looking for approval or was not worrying about whether someone was watching or not. He wasn't concerned about being judged. He didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that maybe someone would see him fall (as there were others in the park aside from him and his mother) and that it would be embarrassing if he did fall. No, all that mattered to him was to accomplish the task or activity at hand to the best of his ability. To run...and to feel the experience of running fully and freely.*

I learned a lot from that observation and experience, and have successfully brought that lesson with me in my many pursuits in life. Since then, I've always believed that **in each of us is a little child with absolute courage**. A child that has the ability to run freely (or express himself fully and freely)—without a care for anything external—without a care for what people would say if he/she experiences a fall.

I believe that that courageous part of us, that courageous child within us all, will always be with us for as long as we live. **We only need to allow it to emerge more fully. We only need to once again connect with that child within us—and give that child permission to run freely, just like that boy in the park.**

Gabriel Daniels publishes *Confidence & Courage Tips...To Help You Realize Your Dreams*. For tips, strategies, stories, quotes, and more...to empower and inspire you to take action...so you can get what you want out of life, visit his website at:

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# How To Be Confident And Relaxed When Speaking Before A Group Of People (Powerful Tips To Help You Become A Highly Effective Speaker/Presenter)

By Gabriel Daniels

## 1. Prepare thoroughly.

Prepare the message of your speech thoroughly. Know exactly what it is you want to bring across to your audience...and why. Knowing the *purpose* of your speech will help focus and organize your thoughts, thus allowing you to be relaxed when it comes time to make your presentation.

In addition, others find it helpful to rehearse their presentation “physically” (or aloud—as if they were actually giving out a presentation...the only difference is, they are speaking to an imaginary audience) before their presentation. While others prefer to rehearse “mentally” (visualization exercises). In fact, most or all *peak performers* (from speakers to athletes...you name it) perform visualization exercises before their actual performance. (This could mean days, weeks, months, or even years in advance depending on the type of performance—and these exercises are usually done on a daily or regular basis.) Use what works for you.

(For those who are not too familiar with the term *visualization*, which is sometimes called *mental imagery* or *mental rehearsal*, basically, what you do is you imagine in your mind's eye the kind of performance you would like to give...with as much detail as possible...and also, the kind of end result you would like from your performance. And it can be done with your eyes open or closed.

*Note:* Visualization exercises are much more effective and powerful when done in what is called “associated” mode [meaning, you are seeing your surroundings from inside your own body—for example, imagining the audience in front of you...imagining how receptive they are...while you are feeling confident and relaxed where you're

standing...and so on—and not watching yourself from a distance]...and with lots of intense and positive feelings. Even better when you can include as many of your five senses as possible in your visualizations.)

Of course, prepare what you're going to wear, as well as, the materials (ex. visual aids) you plan to use in your presentation. Also, if you need to get directions on how to get to the venue where you'll be speaking, do this way ahead of time. That way, you will not feel rushed at the last minute.

The more prepared you are overall, the more relaxed you will be before and during your presentation.

(Of course, if it's going to be impromptu or extemporaneous speaking, then just do your best to organize your thoughts as quickly as you can with whatever time you're given. Focus on your purpose for speaking. Ask yourself, "*What's the message I want to convey? Why do I want to convey this message?*" And stay relaxed as much as possible. You'll learn more about how to do this in the information that follows.)

## **2. Wear something appropriate and comfortable for the occasion.**

When you look good (or *when you know* you look good), you tend to feel good. When you are less self-conscious, you tend to be more at ease. Whether we admit it or not, the way we look somehow affects the way we feel.

Of course, don't forget proper grooming.

## **3. Be convinced that what you have to say matters.**

Be convinced of the importance of your message. Doing this will put you at ease and will make you appear more confident (and above all, congruent).

In fact, do your best to speak only about things/topics you truly believe in or are passionate about. Your conviction and passion will naturally shine through (and applying *Principle #9* below will help even more). This will make you much more credible to your audience. Remember, *your listeners will only believe you if they first sense that you believe in what you are saying.*

#### **4. Put yourself in a "confident" state.**

There are many ways to do this. One of the best ways that I've found is to "act as if" you were already confident (that's if you feel you're not quite in the "confident" state yet). Walk and talk the way you would if you were already extremely confident.

Sometimes, it helps to ask yourself the following questions:

*"How would I feel right now if I were absolutely confident?"*

*"How would I breathe?"*

*"How would I stand?"*

*"How would I walk?"*

*"How would I talk?"*

...and so on.

Another excellent way would be for you to imagine a time in the past when you were completely confident...then bring that state to the present moment...and speak/present while in that state.

Ask yourself the following:

*"When, in the past, was I absolutely confident?"*

*"How did I breathe?"*

*"How did I stand?"*

*"How did I walk?"*

*"How did I talk?"*

...and so on.

(It's very important that when you ask these questions, and when you do these visualizations, you are not imagining yourself outside your body as if you were watching yourself as an actor/actress on a movie screen. You must be in your body...seeing things in the outside world from inside your own body.)

Also, when asking the last few questions (while imagining a past confident state you were in), all you need to do is imagine a time when you were absolutely confident...and it doesn't matter what you were doing at the time, as long as you were absolutely confident. It does not have to be a past speaking situation...although if you could remember a time, that would be great. *(Your main goal is to bring that past, empowering state into the present moment so that you will be in an empowered state to perform at your peak in the present moment.)*

## **5. Keep your attention/focus away from yourself...at all costs.**

In other words, avoid being self-conscious at all costs...because self-consciousness is one of the biggest causes of nervousness. Focus instead on the message you want to bring across to your audience. Focus on why you are there....why you are speaking to them.

Also, avoid or interrupt any negative or disempowering internal dialogue. Immediately interrupt the pattern when you hear the negative voice inside of you saying things like: *"Oh-oh! They're all looking at you...checking you out...measuring you up...judging you...blah-blah-blah."* Come up with an effective way to stop that negative voice in its tracks.

Sometimes, just ignoring it and immediately changing your focus works. At times, it may help to internally yell, "*STOP!*" or, "*STOP IT!*" ...and then immediately change focus. The key is to interrupt the pattern as soon as you catch it. Don't give the monster a chance to grow. Avoid giving it any power over you. Squash it while it's little. Then change your focus immediately.

By the way, I'm curious. I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but it's happened to me quite a few times when I was in my teens. You're just walking along, naturally, without a care in the world, and then someone comes along...someone you admire/like appears out of nowhere...and then you lose your "natural walking rhythm" or the way you walk feels out of sync (a very awkward feeling), all because, all of a sudden, you place your focus on yourself (or you become self-conscious). Has this ever happened to you?

Well, what I eventually learned later on was that, unconsciously, I was saying to myself, "*Oh boy, I better walk nicely because I want to give her the impression that I'm cool.*" In other words, instead of just expressing the natural me, allowing the natural me to just shine through, thus allowing the way I walk to be natural, I ended up *putting on a performance/show* (because I was trying to prove something or trying to gain approval), and that negatively affected my *natural* walking rhythm.

## **6. Breathe naturally and in a relaxed manner.**

In the beginning, you may need to monitor your breathing once in a while to make sure you are breathing naturally—and in a relaxed manner. (I say this because there are probably a lot of people out there who are not even aware of their breathing patterns...especially when under pressure...or when the heat is on. Besides, it only takes a second or two.)

You can usually tell if you're not breathing naturally, because when you are nervous, your stomach muscles either tend to tense up unnecessarily, or your breathing tends to be shallow/fast...or both.



And as a result, you feel uncomfortable—which is a disempowering state. And that's not beneficial to your performance.

After a while, though, you won't have to monitor your breathing as much. In fact, as time goes by, you will get used to breathing naturally—and in a relaxed manner—even under pressure.

In the beginning, it will help a lot if you could make a comparison between the way you breathe when you're relaxed and the way you breathe when you're tense or nervous. Be aware of the difference. (Meaning, whenever you catch yourself being tense or nervous, with your heart beating fast and everything, be aware of the way you breathe...then do the same when you catch yourself in a relaxed mood...for example, while talking to relatives or close friends—people you are already very comfortable with.) Once you are more aware of the difference, you will naturally use what is more beneficial to you, more often, and unconsciously.

(*Note:* Although, in the previous section, I suggested not to be self-conscious, this awareness of your breathing patterns will not violate that principle. Remember, you will merely be doing this in the beginning until such time when you no longer need to do it as often...or at all. And when you do put your awareness on your breathing in the beginning, it's best to do it during a period of inactivity...ex. a pause between phrases or between making a point. If you feel you're *in the flow* while making a presentation, then you don't really need to monitor/check your breathing anymore. It means you're doing fine. Just move on with your presentation.)

## **7. Speak as if you were speaking to a close friend or loved one (in a conversational manner).**

Look at individuals in your audience, eye to eye...as if you were conversing with them individually (as if you were sitting across the table/room from them). Talk directly to one person for a few seconds, then move on to someone else...and keep repeating this. In fact, when you do this, you will feel more relaxed because you will feel like you are talking to individuals (just like in a conversation) and not to a "group" of people. And not only will you appear very confident and relaxed, your audience will automatically feel comfortable and relaxed.

As a result, they will be more receptive to your message. (Remember, confidence and being comfortable are contagious.)

(An excellent book that covers this principle more thoroughly is entitled *You Are The Message* by Roger Ailes. I highly recommend that you find a way to access it and read it. In fact, you can always try your local library, first, if they have it. That way, you won't have to spend anything. Another excellent book that is closely related, which I highly recommend you read, is entitled *You've Got To Be Believed To Be Heard: Reach The First Brain To Communicate In Business And In Life* by Bert Decker.)

### **8. Always remind yourself that it's okay to make mistakes.**

Give yourself permission to make mistakes. It's perfectly okay. You're only human. Even the highest achievers in the world make them. In fact, everybody makes them. (Make the decision ahead of time, before speaking in front of any group, that you will allow yourself to make mistakes...to look awkward or foolish.)

Basically, what I'm suggesting is that you go out there and do your best, or give your all, while at the same time, know that you are willing to forgive yourself (and willing to continue to accept yourself) whatever the outcome may be. It does not make you a bad person or a fool if you make mistakes unintentionally. (If you do it intentionally, then that's a different story. Besides, who in their right mind would "plan" to make mistakes in advance?) Learn from your mistakes, then move on.

By giving yourself permission this way, you will become more relaxed. Why? Because what creates tension, stress, or nervousness in the first place is when a part of you is saying, "*You must be perfect. You must do this perfectly. You can't screw up no matter what happens or else people will see you as a failure.*" While another part of you just wants to naturally go with the flow...not giving a care for anything. This kind of inner conflict (between the different parts of you) is what causes tension, stress, or nervousness.

### **9. Express yourself fully and freely...with your whole being.**

Let your conviction, enthusiasm, and passion show. Unleash them fully and freely. And let it be felt by your audience. (If it helps, you can imagine rays of light emanating from you, penetrating each of your audience members.) Avoid holding back. *Just let go.* When you do this, you will naturally become more confident.

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